Aug. 7. 1670.

A most useful

SERMON

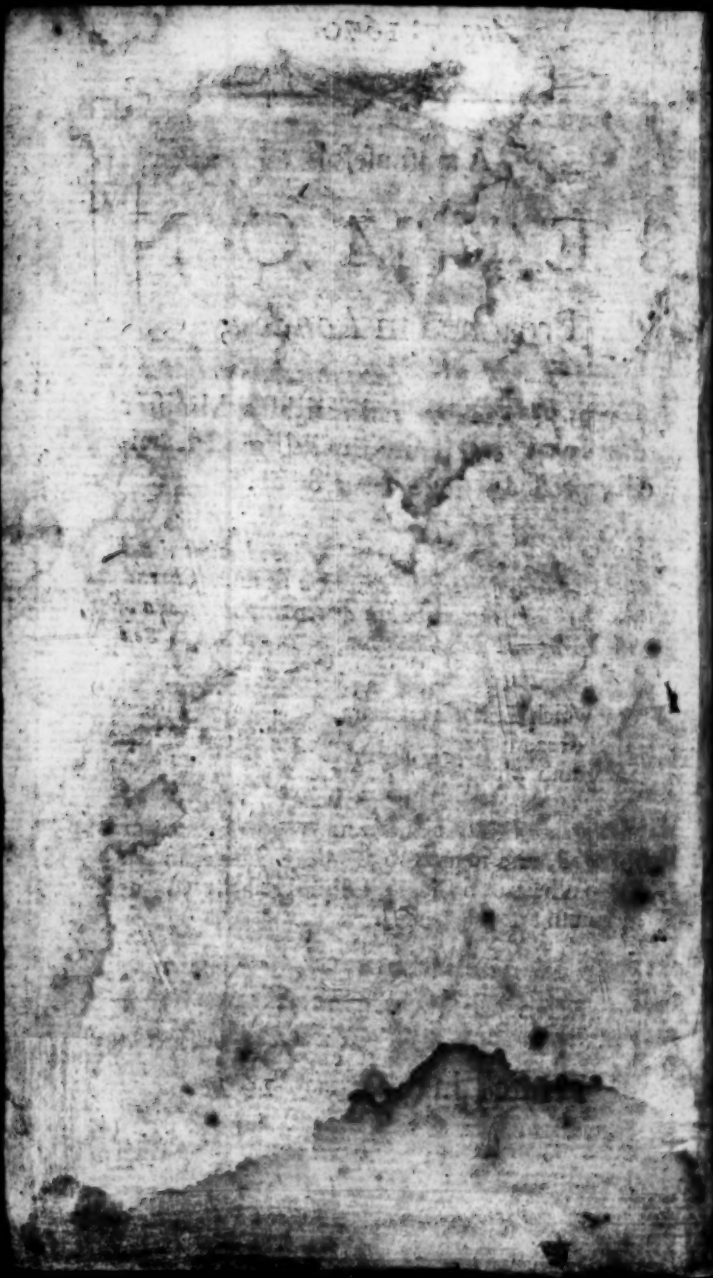
Preached in *London*,

By a most worthy and faithful Minister and Servant of Jesus Christs, most learnedly pressed from *Amos* 8. 11.

Behold the day cometh, saith the Lord God, *that I will send a famine in the Land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, and they shall wander from Sea to Sea.*

From which Text of Scripture, he learnedly shews the dreadful and deplorable condition of that Kingdom which a famine of the word of the Lord seizes upon; and further shews, That they are the greatest Felons who would rob us of the word of God, and that there is more justice in Hell then is here upon Earth, for in Hell they do not punnish the Innocent.

Printed in the Year, 1671.



SERMON

Amos 8. 11.

Behold the day cometh, ſaith the Lord God, that I will ſend a Famine in the land, not a famine of Bread, nor a thirſt for water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord; And they ſhall wander from Sea to Sea.

A Sad Text, and Sad Times too well agree; In the beginning of this Chapter there is a Viſion, in the firſt verſe, The Lord hath ſhewed me, and behold a Basket of ſummer fruits, it was a Type or Emblem to ſignifie the ſuddainneſs of *Iſraels* miſery; you know ſummer fruit doth ſoon periſh, winter fruit may be preſerved long, but ſummer fruit doth ſoon fade; ſo the glory of *Iſrael* (like to ſummer fruit) it ſhall ſoon fade away; there is the Viſion.

2. In

2. In this Chapter there is a Propheſie in the 32*d* verſe; The Songs of the Temple, ſhall be turned into howling, a ſad Propheſie, God grant it may not be our Portion; ſongs of the Temple to become howling, where God formerly was ſerved in a pure manner, where there was ſweet ſinging and melody unto the Lord, now there ſhould be mournful Songs, the joy of the Temple it ſhall be quite ceaſed, A ſad Propheſie!

3. In this Chapter is ſet down the cauſe why the Lord did write ſuch bitter things againſt *Iſrael* his own People, the cauſe was very apparent; it was their ſin, for the new Plagues at the heels of it, *Iſrael* grew now weary of God in the 5*th* verſe of the Chapter, When will the New Moon be gone, that we may ſell corn, they had rather a great deal be trading in their ſhops, then worſhiping in Gods houſe, when will the New Moon be gone, when people grow weary of Ordinances, then God grows weary of a People. And

4. There are ſet down the puniſhments for thoſe ſins of *Iſrael* in the 9*th* verſe of this Chapter, I will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon day. Beloved this is not meant the natural Eclipſe of the Sun, but the

the meaning is, God would now darken *Israels* outward glory and splendor; The Sun in Scripture is a Metaphor for joy; now the going down of the Sun at noon, it is to express great afflictions coming upon this People: when they thought all things should be well, every thing should be well, flourishing peace and prosperity, kissing each other, why now there should be a suddain change, God would Eclipse their outward Comforts; saith he, the Sun shall go down at Noon day, and this was not all, there is a greater punishment yet behind, and that is, in the Text I have read. God threatens for their sins, that there should be a Famine in the Land, not a Famine of Bread, nor a Thirst for Water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord, (as if God should say) it was a mercy if onely a Famine upon your Bodies, that may pine your Bodies, Oh, but it is a worse, a Spiritual Famine; a Famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. In which Text, you have these four parts.

1. Here is a note of admiration in these words, Behold it seems to be a wonder, that *Israel*, God's People in Covenant, to whom the Oracles of God were committed, that these should want the word of the

Lord: Oh what a wonder that such a full breast should be drawn dry! that they that had such plenty of Ordinances, should now be cut short, and forced to cry out, We see not our signs, there is no more any Prophet among us, that's the first. Behold there is admiration.

2. Here is the judgment threatned in the Text, a soul Famine.

3. The extention and universality of this Famine, why saith God, it shall be a Famine in the Land, not in a House or Parish, but there shall be this soul Famine, it shall be universal in the Land.

4. Who it is that gives the Famine a Commission, and that is God; I will send a Famine, not of Bread, or Water, but of hearing of the Word of the Lord.

The words thus opened into these several parts, they yeild us these four Propositions or Doctrines.

1. It doth shew, That the word of God is to the soul as food to the body, for strengthning and refreshing of it, and that's imply'd in *Job* 23.12. I esteemed the words of thy mouth, as my necessary food, they are my food that my soul feeds upon.

2. The second Doctrine is this, When the word of God is despised or opposed,

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it is just with the Lord to take it away from a People.

3. The third Doctrine is this, The taking away of the word, is the beginning of a Spiritual famine, and

4. That a famine of the word, is far worse then a famine of Bread. A famine I will send, saith God, not of Bread, nor of Thirst for Water, but which is worse, the hearing of the word of the Lord, The famine of the word is worse then a famine of bread; next to damning of a soul, what can be worse then starving of it; bodily famine is very sad, much more spiritual famine. I shall speak a little of bodily famine, that will set off the other the more.

Famine is that with-drawing of an necessary recruit of Nature, Famine is the with-holding of that Oyle which should be poured into the Lamp of Man's Life; Famine and Death is such as you see a picture, they both bring the Body into an Anatomy: See a description of a famine in *Jer.* 14. 3. Their Nobles have sent their little ones to the water, they came to the pit and found no water, they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. It is a very unusual sight to see Noble Mens Children Tanckard-bearers; the Nobles

sent their Children, but found no water. Famine of the Body is worse than the Sword is, and that in these three respects.

1. The Sword cuts off suddainly, it makes a quick dispatch, now Famine makes you dye a lingring death, *Lam.* 4. 9. Those pine away, stricken through for want of the fruit of the field; they pine away. Famine will neither let a man live, nor yet suffer him to dye. He that is in famine, may say as St. *Paul*, In death oft; how many deaths doth he dye, before he dyes.

2. Famine is universal, it reaches more then the Sword, the Sword skips over many; they may be hid from the edge of the Sword, as we read of *Obadiah*, he hid a Thousand Prophets in a Cave, and so escaped the edge of the Sword, now a Famine reaches all.

3. Famine makes a man cruel to himself, and it is like a Wolfe in his breast, it makes a man feed upon himself; he eats the flesh of his own arms; it makes a Person unnatural, *Lam.* 4. 10. Thus the famine of the Body is worse than the Sword, and now Beloved, a Famine of the Word is worse than a Famine of Bread, in these two respects.

1. A Famine of Bread is onely a pineing

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and starving of the body. Oh, but the other is starving of the soul; by how much more precious the soul is then the body, so much the sadder the famine of the soul must needs be; the soul is the most spiritual and reserved part of man, it's like spirits of wine, the soul is a divine spark that flees upwards towards God. Now if the soul be more noble than the body, then the famine of the soul must needs be more deadly and pernitious than that of the Body, &c.

2. The Famine of the body is but temporal, but for a time, and it will quickly have an end, sorrow and sighing shall flee away, *Ezek.* 35. Oh, but the Famine of the soul is eternal. The worm will be ever gnawing the man, the man will be ever dying, but never dead, he will never tast of one drop of the water of life, it is an eternal famine, he shall not have one drop of water to cool his tongue, and thus you see the Famine of the word is far more grievous than the Famine of bread: Now the sadness of the souls famine, will further appear in these three or four particulars, And I beseech you observe.

1. To have the Famine of the Word of God, it is a dreadful Judgement, because now the very means of Salvation is taken

taken away: The very Bridge is plucked up, that should lead us over to Heaven. *Prov.* 29. 18. *Where there is no Vision the people perish.* The *Hebrew* word for *perish*, hath two significations, either it signifies to be made naked, *they strip off their Ornaments and glory*, or else the word *perish*, signifies to reject, God rejects such a people, when he takes away the *Vision* from them, *Where there is no Vision the people perish.* But now here is a Question may be asked,

Quest. You will say unto me, but may we not be saved without the Word Preached?

Ans. I will not dispute what God can do, in an extraordinary way, when people are debarr'd from Ordinances by sickness, or the like, or captivity, the Lord hath promised to be a little Sanctuary unto them. *Ezek.* 11. 16. As the people of *Israel* in the *Wilderness*, when they could not have the ordinary means of tilling, plowing, and sowing; in this case God gave them bread from Heaven, *John* 6. 31. Let me assure you, ordinarily God doth not distil the Golden Oyle of Salvation, but through the pipes of Ordinances, and therefore you shall observe in Scripture,

that

that Miniſters of the Goſpel, are called Miniſters of the Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 3. 8. becauſe the ſpirit of God ordinarily makes uſe of the Word, to work grace, and therefore 'tis called the Miniſtry of the ſpirit, why this makes the Famine of the Word ſo diſmal, becauſe now, the very means of ſalvation is taken away from a people, they lie in their blood.

2. I beſeech you obſerve, A Famine of the Word it is very ſad wherever it comes, becauſe now the Lord turns away his face from a people or a nation. Ordinances are the face of God, they are his ſmiles, face, in the Goſpel, it's called the face of Chriſt, 2 *Cor* 4. 6. Now beloved, when a ſpiritual Famine comes, God turns away his face from us. The Child had rather have his Fathers frowns upon him, than that he ſhould turn away his face, to be ſo incenſed againſt him that he will not look upon his Child; and this is ſad, to have God turn away his face from a people; better have a frowning face from God, than noe face. The Lord may have love under a wrinckled brow, as the ſun may be under a Clowd; but for God to turn away his face from us, is a ſigne he intends to diſinherit us, as *David* prayed, *Lord hide not*

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thy face from me in Anger, Psal. 120. 2. It is said when God hides his face for a time, but worse when he quite turns away his face, that he will not look upon a people, Oh this makes a soul-famine very sad and dreadful.

3. The Famine of the Word must needs be very sad and dismal, because if the Word be gone, God has now done speaking to us, he hath no more to say. Pray observe, It is called in the Text a famine of hearing, of hearing of the Word, we shall hear no more from God; God hath something to say to a people as long as his Ordinances are amongst them; he speaks to them by his Ministers, they are his mouth, they deliver his Council. Now as it is a sad judgement for God to have done smiting a people, *Ezek.* 1. 5. why should you be smitten any more, and so for God to leave speaking to a people, this is a rebellious people, it is to no purpose to use any more words, I will speak no more to them, it is better for God to speak as if he were angry, than not to speak at all: the prisoner cryes to his Judge for mercy, mercy, and the Judge will not speak a word noe way, but he must dye; if God hath done speaking to us in Word, we shall hear him

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ſpeaking in another Language, in his Wrath. In Pſal. 2. 5. *Then ſhall he ſpeak to them in his Wrath, and fiery Language.* If a man will not ſpeak to another, it is a ſign either that he ſlights him, or he doth not think him worth ſpeaking to, or it is a ſign he intends ſome evil againſt him. It was ſad with *Saul*, when the Lord had done ſpeaking to him, 1 *Sam.* 28. 6. the Lord anſwered him neither by rain, nor his Prophets, God had done ſpeaking to him, a ſign ſome evil was intended to him, the next he heard ſpeak in was the Devil, and the news which he brought was ſad, to morrow thou ſhalt be with me, 1 *Sam.* 28. 19. Believe it, God hath once done ſpeaking to a people, why then he hath done hearing too, when he ſhuts his mouth he alwayes ſtops his ears, though you pray unto him he will not hear; *they cryed to me and I would not hear*, when the Lord will not ſpeak no more to a people, when he ſhuts his mouth he preſently ſtops his ears. Now is not a ſpiritual famine ſad? God hath now done ſpeaking to a people.

The people and the diſpenſers of the Goſpel, they are promiſed by the Lord as great bleſſings to a place, why then to be deprived of ſuch bleſſings, and have a fa-

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mine of the Word it must needs be a heavy and a dismal Judgement. Now to speak more distinctly to these,

1. Consider what a great blessing the Gospel is, and

2. The dispensers of it, and then you will easily conclude what a Judgement it is to be deprived of them.

As for the Gospel, it is a blessing which Crowns a people, the very Engine which God uses to convert a Soul. It is called in Scripture the word of life, because it infuses life into the people, it is a two edged sword, *Heb.* 4. 12. with one edge it strikes sin dead, with the other edge it strikes the soul alive. besides consider the great blessing of this people in these three particulars, and you will see what it is to be deprived, of it.

1. The Gospel of Christ, it is the beauty, the riches, it is the strength of a Kingdome, the most sparkling Jewel in their Crown, the beauty of God shines in the Gospel, Brethren, the Gospel is the glasse in which we see, the unsearchable riches of Gods love to a sinner. The Gospel preached gives us the presence of Christ, and Christs presence is the spiritual beauty of a Nation; now if there be a famine of

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the Word, then the glory is departed. *England* without the Gospel will be like unto a house, when the rich furniture and hangings are pulled down, the house is naked and deformed; so if the preaching of the Word be Eclipsed, then the glory of a Kingdom is Entombed, and all places of honour lye in the dust.

2. The preaching of the Gospel is the riches of a Kingdome, it encreases a Kingdoms treasure and revenue, there are many temporal blessings that come along with the word, it hath been observed that those places have been most fruitful and have been most enriched where the Gospel hath been planted, trading in those parts hath been most quick; it is observable that same place of King *Jehosaphat*, that when he had taken care for a preaching Ministry, and sent his Princes and his Nobles to encourage his Ministers; Oh how rich did his kingdome grow, they brought him presents of silver, and he waxed exceeding rich, 2 *Chron.* 17. 11. The Gospel it is like the Ark which carries a blessing with it where ever it went, *Hag.* 2. 18. saith God, Consider from this day, even from the day that the Lords Temple was laid, from this day will I bless you: *Israels* mercies did bear date

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from the Temple building; so that the Gospel is the riches of a Kingdome.

Mark what I say to you this day, the ready way to beggar a Kingdom is to take away the Gospel: I beseech you remember a Famine of Gods word will soon bring a Famine of Bread upon a Land.

3. The Gospel preached is the defence of a Kingdom, it is a Kingdoms safety and defence, it is the Port-Royal of a Land, it is the very lock whereon *England's* strength lies; what was the strength of *Israel*, God was there, there was his word, and there was his ordinances, that was the Rock where *Israels* strength did lye, not brazen Walls but river Jordan, are the best defence of our Land. It is said of the *Levites* or Ministers, that when they came & preached at *Jerusalem*, 2 *Chron.* [illegible] the text saith, they strengthened the Kingdom: remarkable in Scripture, they as take away the preaching of the Gospel are like those that pull down the Banks to let in the main Sea, they open a sluce to let in the wrath of God upon a Kingdom; thus you see the Gospel is a singular blessing, and therefore to have a famine of the word to have the Gospel go, it must needs be a great curse to a Land.

Again

Again, as the Gospel is a great blessing so the Dispensers, the Ministers of the word, they are promised as great blessings to a Land; and therefore to have them removed, and a Soul famine, it is a heavy judgment: God promises his Ministers as blessings to a Nation, *Jer.* 3. 15. I will give you Pastors after mine own heart, that shall feed you with knowledge, and that they are great blessings, appears by the title the Scripture gives to them.

1. They are called the Dispensers and Stewards of Gods word, they are called Embassadours, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. We as Embassadours of God, beseech you in Christs stead to be reconciled, we come to woo you in Christs name, and clear up your souls to Christ, we come to make up the happy match between Christ and you, we bring the Kings picture along with us, we set before your eyes the Lord Jesus in his most Orient Colours, we shew him to you in the beauty of his Person, the glory of his Offices, the sweetness of his love, why now, if on a sudden God calls home his Embassadours, it is a sign he intends the match shall be broken off.

2. They are called Dispensers and Stewards of the word of God, they are

called ſtars in Gods hand, *Rev.* 1. 20. They are ſtars.

Firſt, For their light, how glorious is the Goſpel when it is beſpangled and ſet thick with thoſe ſtars.

Secondly, they are ſtars not only for light but for uſe, they are like the ſtar that guided the wiſe man to Jeſus Chriſt, if thoſe ſpiritual ſtars be removed, how ſhall the ſoul know how to ſteer its courſe, they will be like Mariners that are benighted upon Shelves and Rocks, Oh, how many where theſe ſtars are wanting, ſhall to hell in the Dark.

3. They are called Diſpenſers and Stewards of Gods holy Oracles. They are called Phyſitians, *Jer.* 8. 22. Is there no Balm in *Gilead*, is there no Phyſitian there! the ſoul of man is ſubject to more Diſeaſes then the Body, as one Chriſtian is troubled with the Stone of the heart, another with a dead Palſey, and benumedneſs of Conſcience, now it is the work of Gods Miniſters to find out theſe Diſeaſes, and to apply proper remedy. Beloved how ſad is it, to have your Phyſitian taken away that ſhould heal you, to have a poor ſoul lie all in Agony, in a burning Feavour of Conſcience, and now to ſpeak words in

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due ſeaſon, or drop in Chriſt; is there no Balm in *Gilead*?

4. God calls his Miniſters his Waterers, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. *Apollo's* was a Waterer, now you know if you have a plant ſet in a good ſoil, if it be not watered, it yields no fruit. This City of *London* hath had many *Apolloes* in it, it hath had much watering, you have been watered with the Labourers of your Miniſters, and perhaps watered with their Tears too; Oh, but for your ſins, God may command, that there ſhall be no more ſhowers, no more watering; If the Lord ſhould tranſplant his *Apolloes*, and ſee there is more need of watering and planting in forreigne parts, how would this work of Grace go backward in us, how would your good affections wither, and be as the ground that is parched and dryed for want of ſhowers; Thus Beloved, you ſee what a great bleſſing it is to have the Goſpel Diſpenſers among you, and therefore you may imagine what a ſpiritual famine is, and to have theſe bleſſings removed; well may *England* weep her eyes out, when theſe are gone that ſhould bring the Viſion to her.

Now my Beloved, if a famine of Gods word be so deplorable and dreadful as it is to have the Bread of life taken away from us, as you may read *Amos* 8. 11. it is called there, A famine of the word of the Lord, and in *Sam.* 1. 4. it is called there, The glory departed, and in *Matth.* 26. 47. The Kingdome of Heaven taken away, The Salvation of God sent away, *Acts* 28. and can there be any thing worse befall a people, than a soul famine, and an Eclipse of their spiritual glory, the shutting up of the Kingdome of heaven, the carrying away of the Salvation of God, what worse thing can come upon a people? It is a great wonder there should be no deeper a sence of this most dreadful of evils, than is mostly found among Men. Men little understand what they do, who either in a way of Merit, or Instrumentally procure and bring on these Plagues, and few understand or are sensible what they herein suffer; to be an instrument in this hellish work, it's an Office for a Devil, and the suffering of such a Plague to them as understand it, is an hell above ground, this Darkness is the very same for kind, with the darkness of Hell, as the light of the Gospel is the same in kind with the ever-

everlasting light, as glory under age; so is this thick darkneſſe, *in ſpecei & in ſimile*, the darkneſſe of the pit, Oh what a hell of wickedneſſe doth this world then become, the Devil is then in his Region, is let looſe and rules the world at pleaſure, deceives, devours, deſtroys ſouls without Contradiction, takes them Captive at his will, carries them down by wholeſale to diſtruction. Theſe dark, and diſmal ſeaſons are the Devils Market, where he may vent his helliſh Wares, his Snares and Temptations, his Deceipts and Deluſions, and every abominable thing by whole-ſale; there is nothing ſo falſe, ſo vile and abominable, but he can put it off at pleaſure, Adultery, Drunkenneſſe, Witchcraft, Sodomy, Buggery, Blaſphemy, Idolatry, Atheiſme, any thing that Sathan hath to offer he will find Cuſtomers enough to receive, and the truth is, the Devil may ſpare his pains; Men then need not a Devil to damne them, they ſhall do it faſt enough of their own Accords.

Oh, it were happy if the Saints were ſo buſie in improving their light, to haſte them Heaven-ward, as ſinners do their darkneſſe, to hurry them to Hell.

Oh, the ſad truths that the world affords of this dreadful truth; look into all the dark Corners of the Earth, eſpecially there where there hath been light, and ſee if you find not all this proved to your hand. Can he then be accounted a Chriſtian whoſe heart doth not tremble at the thoughts and the fears of ſuch a ſore judgment, he is both dark and dead indeed, to whom ſuch a Miſt is not as the firſt born of death, or the King of Terrours.

Chriſtians, If ever this ſhould be your Caſe, make not light of it, and take heed, how ſad ſoever it may ſeem in its firſt approach, that no track of time do wear off the ſence of it; I have now done, and come to improve this Propoſition, and proceed to the Application.

Uſe 1. Now my friends, If a famine of the word be ſo dreadful (as you have heard) next to damning of ſouls, I know not what worſe then ſtarving of a ſoul, if it be ſo diſmal, then what are we to think of thoſe that endeavour by their Counſel and by their Intereſt, what in them lies, to be inſtrumental to bring a famine of the word upon Gods People.

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For my part I account thoſe, and always ſhall do, the greateſt Felons in the Land, who would rob us of the word of God; theſe are the Devils Agents, they are his Factors; let me aſſure you they will be found fighters againſt God; They are like the *Philiſtians* that ſtops the Wells (thoſe that would ſtop the Wells of the Water of Life) Oh, how would this inhaunce their ſin! What to be inſtrumental to ſtarve ſouls? I will ſay but this, the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt they are to warn people of their Sins, they are to tell them if there be any danger, any wrath of God hanging over a Land, they are Watchmen, *Ezek.* 33. 6. 2. If Watch-men ſee the Sword come and blow not the Trumpet, and the People be not warned; their blood I will require at the Watch-mens hands. Now Bretheren I appeal to you; We Watch-men muſt warn the people. Oh how will they be able to anſwer to God at the great day, that ſhall take Miniſters off from his Spiritual Watch, that ſhall hinder him from warning the People; Surely the blood of ſouls muſt needs lie at thoſe mens doors; that is the Firſt.

Use 2. It is of Exhortation; if a Gospel Famine be so dreadful as you have heard, as good almost be in hell; why then let me exhort you this day to some duty.

1. Let us labour with all laboriousness to prevent the removal of the Gospel from us, as we would endeavour to remove the Sword, the Fire, the Plague, so let us labour to prevent the removal of the Gospel from us: Oh a Gospel famine is the most dismal! and the more let my words prevail with you, because there is so much fear (if God prevent not) of the Gospel departing from us. I might shew you that there is a soul famine in many parts of this Land already, and there are many sad signs the Lord is about to bring this spiritual famine upon this Land. I shall shew you the sad simptoms of the Gospel going from *England*, there are (4. gray hairs) 4. sad signes of the Gospel departing, which the Lord prevent.

1. First of all that great contempt which is thrown upon the Gospel and professors of it; do we think that God is tied to

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England more than to another Nation? do we think the Lord will continue his mercie to a people that dispise his mercie? is he bound to do that? is not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus this day slighted and persecuted? the *Gergesens*, they were more mannerly, they beseeched Christ to depart out of their Coasts *Matt.* 8. 34. But we have many among us, they do not beseech Christ, they would drive him out by force, though nothing but hony dropps from the Lipps of the Gospel, it brings salvation to a people, yet how is it opposed at this day? pray observe, I contest the Gospel of Christ, it is not suited to mens carnal interest or appetite, the Gospel doth not tell them of Fields and Vineyards it hath to bestow upon them, the Gospel of Christ doth not prophesie of Wine and strong Drink, then the Drunkard would gladly receive the Gospel; but it is a holy Gospel, it beats down mens lusts, it proclaimes peace to them upon no other tearms, but their proclaiming Warre against Sinne, and therefore the Gospel is hated and contemned, and sorely this contempt of Christ and his Gospel, it is a sad fore-

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runner of the removal of the Gospel; Marke what I say, a despised Gospel will soone be a departing Gospel; will any man stay long in a place where he is not welcome? If God sees that he and his Gospel are not welcome, he will soon take his leave and be gone from them *Hos. 2. 12. Woe, Woe to them when I depart from them.* Well, that is the first sad simptom of the Gospel departing.

Secondly, Another sign of the gospel going, it is the general barrennesse of people under the preaching of the gospel; indeed it is to be hoped that some are fruitful, but the barren branches are more than the fruitful; *Lea* did comfort her self for her fruitfulnes that now her husband would love her, *Gen. 29. 34. She was fruitful, therefore her husband would love her.* May not we on the contrary fear God will not love us because we are unfruitful? it is a sad sign, when in the Weekly bill we see more every Weeke die than are born; Oh is it not so in a spiritual sence? we hear of many people that die Apostates, but how few are born to God. We hear of many barren Fig-trees that Christ cursed, but where

are

are the fruitful Vines? if once that gospel, and people which was as the garden of God, shall become barren, it is a sign the Lord will bestow no more cost, but will pull up the hedge, and lay his Vineyard waste; that is the second Symptom.

Thirdly. Another sad sign of the gospel going from us, which the Lord prevent, it is the animosities and bitter divisions of Gods own people; the Devil danceth at discords, it is a sad sight not onely to see Christs Coat rent, but to see his Bodie rent, his mistical Bodie. I have often seen, & it is usual, the Woolf to worrie the Lamb, but it is unnatural to see one Lamb worrying another: Christians, they should be ready to dye one for another, and they can hardly live one by another; Those that write concerning the Bee, observes, when the Bees strive and mutanie togerher, it is a signe that the master Bee is about to leave the Hive; and when Gods people strive by discords & contentions, Oh it is a sign God is going from the Nation, he is about to leave [illegible]ive. If that servants cannot agree

agree, they will fall out, why the Master will take away the light from them, I wish it be not soe here. My beloved, do not we all hope for one heaven? Oh why should there not be one heart among us? how unsationable are contentions among Gods people, now when the Popish adversary is so near to us, he is at the door. It is a very bad time for Marriners to divide and fall out when the Enemie is boreing a hole in the bottom of the ship, is it not so now? surely it is a sad signe of the gospel going from us, the Lord will not let his gospel dwell in such a house as is all on fire.

Fourthly, Another sad signe of the Gospel going from us and a Spiritual Famine, it is this; When the People of God lose their first love, and decline in their affections towards Jesus Christ, *Rev.* 2. 4. I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love; when Christians have a Chilnesse and a Deadnesse grow upon them, they have not the love to the word of God as they had, they have not that brokenness of heart for sin,

sin, they have not that zeal for truth, they have not that sympathize for the misery of *Sion*, they are now in a declining state, they have left their first love, and this is a fatal signe of Gods departing from the Nation; Lost thy first love, it will not be amiss to enquire whence this losse of our first love ariseth, this Spiritual Consumption (as I may so call it,) whence does this losse of our love arise, I conceive it ariseth from these four Causes.

First, Perhaps there is some sin secretly indulged, some sinne that your heart sets brooding upon, now sinne is pernicious to grace; it is like the blow at the Root of the Tree, that causeth the Tree to wither; as if a man takes but a small quantity of poison, why this will hurt his vitals, it will waste his spirit, look upon *David*, he had been taking of poison, he was tampering with sin and he found a decay in his holiness, he was like one in an Apoplexie, he had not that lively acting of Grace as formerly he had, he lost his first love.

&c.

Secondly, The losse of our first love, it may arise from the neglecting of the Ordinances, the means of Grace; you know abstinasie from food will quickly make the body Consumptive, it will soon bring a Consumption; so when People either through Pride or through Melancholly leave off Praying, leave off Sacraments; they have abstinasie from their Spiritual food, no wonder if they find a declining in their affections, Gods Ordinances they are the fuel for our Graces, if you take away the fuel, no wonder you begin to abate and you loose your first love.

Thirdly, The losse of our first love ariseth, and I pray observe it, it riseth from a formal use of holy things, though perhaps we do keep up duty, yet God knows we do not keep up fervency in duty, *Rom.* 12. 11. Fervent in spirit serving the Lord. Oh, when once Christians grow into dull formality, pray as if they prayed not, their hearts is not in the duty, they do not put fire to the insence, they grow Drowsie in Prayer, you know the wise Virgins they slumbered, *Matth.* 25.

Thus

Thus by degrees you lose your first love, though you be not quite dead in sin, yet you are dead in duty.

Fourthly, The loss of your first love, ariseth from a spiritual loath, Christians do not exercise themselves to godliness, and then there follows a decay in godliness; why, you know your experience tells you there is nothing in the world sooner brings a mans body into a Consumption than want of exercise, because the ill humours are not purg'd away, and natural heat exercised, want of exercise kills. My brethren, he that will not use grace, he will be sure to loose grace; Christians they do not exercise their faith, they do not busie themselves about heaven, they do not trade their Tallent for Gods glory as they should; they live in houses together, but they do no good together, they do not exercise their grace, and hence they fall into decay of grace before they are aware and loose their first love, and what follows, this loss of your first love badly prefages the loss of the gospel of Christ, for this very sin in the second of the *Revelations* and the fourth

4th v. for sin they had their golden Candlestick removed from them, in the second of the *Revelations* and the first verse. Therefore you see brethren what need there is to labour to prevent the spiritual Famine, and a loss of the gospel, because there is such a fear of the gospel departing from you, you have seen it evidently proved before your eyes.

But here is a question, now you will say unto me, we cannot denie but there is a fear of the removal of the gospel, and of a famine of the Word; but how shall we do to prevent this soul Famine? now to this I answer, do these three or four things to prevent the gospel going away.

First, Take heed of those sins which will surely bring a Famine of Gods Word, there are some sinnes which we must endeavour to prevent, that will bring a famine of the word, there are several of these sinnes set down in this Chapter, *Amos* 8. Pray observe them, I will mention some of them.

The firſt ſinne the Prophet does ſet down, is Oppreſſion, *Amos* 8. 11. Hear this, Oh you that ſwallow up the needy. Thoſe Jews they were like the Fiſhes of the Sea, the greater devour the leſſer; For this ſin of Oppreſſion God threatens a Famine of the Word, and is not this ſinne to be found among us. Oppreſſion, I appeal to any one that hath his Reaſon left. Does not one Man now become a Woolfe to another, does not he tear from him the Golden Fleece; I dare be bold to ſay there is more Juſtice to be found in Hell then among men upon Earth; for in Hell no Innocent Perſon is oppreſt, that is one ſinne.

Secondly, Another ſinne the Prophet ſets down, that is the cauſe of this Spiritual Famine; it was wearineſſe of Gods Ordinances, *Amos* the *5th* and *8th* Verſe. When will your New Moons be gone that we may ſell Corne, and the Sabbath that we may ſet forth Wheat, Verſe 6. For this ſinne I will bring a Famine of the Word; are you

weary of me, They were more for Trading then they were for worshiping; The Lord hath fed us of this City with the finest of the Wheat, the Bread of life, he hath given us the very Creame of his Ordinances. but when we have been fed to the full, have not we begun to surfeit, have we not said, when will the Sabbath be gone, what a wearinesse is it? Truely when we have lost our Stomach, it is most just with God to take away our Food; If a Mans Commodities bares a better price in one place then in another, he will remove his Market; the Gospel is grown a cheap Commodity, it bears but a loe price; now Men are weary of it: and may not we fear God will remove his Market, he will transplant his Word into Foreign parts: Surely if we begin to say what a wearines is it if our mercies be our burthens, God can soon ease us of this burthen; this is a sinne brings a Famine of the Word, when we are weary of the Ordinances; and hath not this sinne caused a Famine of the Word already in many parts of this Land. There is

none

none knows how to ſpeak to their Spiritual Caſe, that can feed them with the Bread of life, that can divide the Word aright, in many parts of the Land it is ſo, they have Husks given to them inſtead of Food, and Muſick inſtead of Manna.

Thirdly, Another ſinne that brings a ſoul Famine, is this cozening in mens Dealings, Verſe 5. Making the Ephar ſmall, the Ephar it was the Kings Meaſure, Verſe 7. In ſelling they made the Ephar ſmall, the meaning is, they gave but ſcanty Meaſure; they made the Ephar ſmall; and ſaith God, you ſell the refuge of the Wheat, that is mear Cheating, they pick out of the beſt Grain for themſelves, and the Husks and Refuge they ſell to the poor; here is mear Cheating, ſaith God, I will bring a Famine of the Word upon you for this; let none hold in their hands falſe Ballances: I would there did not.

Fourthly, Another ſinne that brings a Famine in this Chapter, is Idolatry, Verſe 4. They that ſwear by the ſinne of *Samaria*, and ſay, Thy God Oh *Dan* liveth, here was plain Idolatry; but let us underſtand this ſinne of *Samaria*, what was that? that was the Calf that was ſet up at *Bethel* near to *Samaria*, and to ſwear to this Calf, here was plain Idolatry; for this God threatned a Famine of the Word, and are we free from this ſinne, I would we were: is there no Idol worſhip among us, are there not ſome ſo impotent, as to ſay in Print, It will never be well with us till we are reconciled to the Mother Church of *Rome*: Idolatry it inrageth God, it breaks the Marriage Knot, it makes God give a Bill of Diſvorce to a People; Idolatry it does ſo provoke the Lord, that he takes away the viſible Tokens of his preſence from a Nation, 2 *King.* 17. 12. 18. They ſerved Idols, What follows, Verſe 18. Therefore the Lord was very angry with *Iſrael*, removed them quite out of his ſight, he unpeopled them, he unchurched them, he removed

removed them out of his ſight. I ſay this to you, when once you ſee darke ſhaddows of Popery ſtretched out, then fear the Sunne of the Goſpel is going down.

Fifthly, Another ſinne that brings a Goſpel Famine, it is oppoſition to Reformation, when God calls to a Land to returne to him by Repentance, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?* but they will go on in ſinne when God cries to them by his Judgments to break of ſinne, but they will not hear the voice of Gods Rodd, *Jer.* 5. *verſe* 3. they refuſe to receive Correction, when once it is thus with a people, God will pack up and be gon from them, 7. *Jer.* 13, 14. *ver. Therefore will I doe to this Houſe which is called by my Name, as I did to* Shilo; why what did God do to *Shilo*? when he left the tokens of his wrath there at *Shilo*, the Prieſt was ſlain, the Arke taken Priſoner, all the ſigns of Gods preſence were removed, and we never read that the Arke returned to *Shilo* any more. Oh dreadful! hath not the Lord blown the Trumpet in our

ears? hath not he called to us to repent, but we hate to be reformed, we turn a deaf ear to God; let *England*, let *London*, take heed it be not with it, as once with *Shilo* that God does not make the Vision cease, and bring a Famine of the word in these our days, *Levit.* 26. *verse* 23. pray observe, 24. 30. saith God, *verse* 23. I *will punish you yet seven times more, for your sinnes I will make you lie waste, and I will bring your Sanctuary into desolation*, that is the first thing: if you would prevent a Gospel Famine, I beseech you beloved take heede of those sinnes which you have seen have brought a Famine of Gods Word upon a Land.

Secondly, If you would prevent a Famine of the Gospel, let us besiege the Throne of Grace by earnest prayer; Oh pray to God, you that can pray, pray, that the Lord would not depart from you, that he would not make the Vision cease, that he would not turne the Songs of our Temple into Howleing, Oh lay hold upon Christ by importunitie you read of those

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in the Goſpel, when Chriſt made as if he was going away, the Text ſaith, they did conſtrain him to ſtay with them, *Luke* 24. Verſe 29. Is not the Lord upon the Thraſhal of his Temple, as if he was ready to take his wings and flye from us? Oh let us by humble prayer lye at his Feet, and if it be poſſible, conſtraine him yet to ſtay with *England*; ſtay Lord, rather any Judgement than this! rather lay a ſtroake upon my Body or Eſtate, but doe not bring a Famine of the Word of God; and if we would prevaile with the Lord, uſe Arguments in prayer when we come to God for the poor Goſpel of *England*: Lord haſt thou never a Remnant left among us, a People that love thee, and fears thee, that hangs about thee, that will not let thee goe? Oh deſtroy not the cluſter, is not there a bleſſing in it? Oh wilt thou be gone from us, art not thou our Father, will the Father take away Bread from his Children? Lord, will not the Enemie inſult to ſee thee leaving thy Temple, where thou haſt put thy Name? wilt thou make the

hearts of thy people ſadde, and wilt thou rejoyce thine Enemies? Oh Lord, haſt thou not given Bond, and is there better Security? haſt thou not promiſed under thy Hand and Seale thou wilt give us Paſtors after thine own heart to feed us with Knowledge? Lord, thou wilt never Forfeit thy Bond. It is true, we are an unworthy Nation, not worthy to be Beloved; Oh but canſt not thou make us fit for Mercie? canſt not thou give us Repentance as well as Deliverance? Nay Lord, let us farther preſs thee, is not thy Honour concerned in all this? we are called by thy Name, leave us not; thus ſhould we uſe Arguments and follow God by prayer, and ſurely the Lord will not depart from us. Prayer, it makes a ſweet ſound in Gods Ear, and he will not goe away, where he hears this Muſick. Againe,

Thirdly, Would we prevent a Goſpel Famine (which we have cauſe to fear) let us this day turne to God and break off our ſinnes by righteouſneſs, *Jer.* 7. Verſe 3. Amend your wayes

wayes and your doings, it is a vain thing to pray unleſs you reform, amend your wayes and your doings: What ſhould God continue his Goſpel for to an impenitent ſinnefull Land, that are reſolved they will ſinne; who will lay out coſt upon ground that brings forth nothing but Briars? who will power Roſe-water upon a Dunghill? Would we prevent a Goſpel Famine, let us breake up the Follow ground of our hearts by Repentance. I will ſay but this, if we Reforme not, we can expect to ſee no good dayes more, God will un-People us, he will un-Church us ere he hath done; Oh better looſe the Sunne in the Firmament, than that the Goſpel Sunne ſhould be Eclipſed in our Horiſon: who would deſire to live when the Arke of God is gone? what good Chriſtian can forbeare weeping at the Funeral of the Goſpel? that is the firſt exhortation; let us labour to prevent the coming of Gods Famine upon us, as we would prevent Fire, and Plague, ſo labour to prevent this Soul Famine.

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Second *Vſe*, of Exhortation is this, if a Famine of the Word be ſo ſad as you have heard, let us doe what we can to keep *God* ſtill amongſt us and his *Goſpel*. You will ſay how ſhall we keep the *Goſpel*, it is a bleſſed deſigne to keep the *Goſpel*? I will name three or four things, and I have done.

First, Entertain the *Goſpel* into your houſes, that is one way to keep it; *Obadiah* he entertained the Ark, and his houſe was bleſſed for the Ark ſake; if you cannot have the *Goſpel* in publick, as you uſe to have with purity and freedome, get it into your houſes; I am ſure of this, you can never put your houſes to better uſe, then to entertain Chriſt and his *Goſpel*; I beſeech you let it not be ſaid, that the *Goſpel* is put to ſeek its lodging; does not this *Goſpel* bring Salvation? Oh how glad ſhould you be to have Salvation come to your Houſe.

Secondly, Would you keep the *Goſ-*

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pel among you? Improve it the beſt way, I know ſtill to enjoy the *Goſpel*, is to improve it, lay up a ſtock of knowledge, let the word of Chriſt dwell richly in you, *Coll.* 3. Verſe 16. Receive the Word not only into your heads, but into your hearts, get good by the word Preached, while the Manna falls gather Manna, the beſt way to enjoye the *Goſpel* is to improve it, *God* will not take away the Breſt, ſo long as Faith draws the breſt. And then,

Thirdly, Priſe the *Goſpel* and that is the way to keep it, the Ordinances of *God* are the moſt ſignal bleſſings, they are better then Gold & Silver, they are the food of your ſouls, they ſtrengthen faith, they increaſe joy; theſe are the Conduits that holds the Water of Life, that ſoul that before was dry like *Aarons* Rod being planted near theſe waters of the Ordinances, have flouriſhed, have brought forth Buds and Almonds, and therefore priſe the Ordinances. Beloved here we converſe with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, if ever we enjoy Chriſt upon earth, it is here; if ever we ſee his face, it is through this Lattice,

tice, Gods Ordinances are like the place of the Mercy Seat, where the Lord did ſpeak from heaven to his People; oh then priſe thoſe Goſpel bleſſings, and that is the way yet to keep them among you.

And laſtly, If you would keep the Goſpel with you, adorne the Goſpel, you that are here preſent, you do all profeſs the Goſpel, that is not enough, unleſſe you adorn the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 27. Let your Converſation be as becomes the Goſpel; but when do we adorn the Goſpel? I anſwer, when we live according to the rule of the Goſpel in ſobriety and ſanctity, Oh that is to adorn it: when we walk according to the rule of it in ſobriety and ſanctity, we adorn the Goſpel; when we walk as the Members of Chriſt, and as thoſe that are acted by his Spirit, we adorn the Goſpel; when we ſhine forth in a kind of Angelical brightneſſe, and live ſo holy as if we had ſeen the Lord, this is to adorne the Goſpel, and this is the beſt way I know to have the Goſpel intailed upon us, and upon our poſterity after us.

Finis.